

Pam Grieve

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Good morning,

I am writing to provide comments to the FCC on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. E-Rate has been very important to Iditarod Area School District because it has helped our students and teachers gain access to a wealth of online resources, communicate and collaborate, and develop the 21st century skills necessary for college and career. With increased bandwidth our students can also receive instruction from any where even in the Rural Alaskan Bush area where some of our students do not even have plumbing in their homes let alone home internet.

Not having access in their homes already limits when our students are able to do their assigned work by not having access to online textbooks from home like students in the lower 48 or ability to do homework assignments requiring the necessary internet access. Then our schools don't even have what is needed to provide them with access to the tools students in the lower 48 have access to any time anywhere when our students don't even have those opportunities at school due to our reduced ability to provide necessary bandwidth to run online tools, texts, and programs simultaneously for our various grade level needs. Teachers have to plan what they are doing around the needs of other grade levels at their sites, even when there are only 20-60 students in grades K-12.

Without increased bandwidth we will not be able to join the online initiatives for state mandated testing coming to Alaska.

E-Rate funding levels have not kept pace with my district's current bandwidth needs! I urge you to raise the E-Rate funding level in rural areas to provide our students a level playing field with the rest of America's students. Internet is MUCH MUCH more expensive in our rural areas that go through satellite to the extent that we can only afford to get 3 or 4 MB of download speed and 1.5 to 2 MB of upload speed. 90% of Americans have 5-10 times higher that than in their own homes, but our Alaskan students can't even get 10 MB at their rural schools, and our 90% number is how many of them do NOT have internet at home, so their only hope is to have decent internet at school!

As a Technology Director in Alaska, I know that seamlessly infusing digital learning throughout the curriculum is a prerequisite for students to graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's global economy. Access to high-speed broadband is the key to allowing modern teaching and learning to occur in all schools across the country.

In my schools in rural Alaska where I AM the tech department of one for Iditarod Area School District, we use digital learning to personalize learning, provide online classes, VTC classes, meet State Standards,

attempt to administer online assessments, make data-driven decisions, etc. An example of digital learning in our district is trying to juggle when teachers can use which online tool to supplement instruction, upload digital projects to Google Drive to share products, or upload images to create the projects to begin with due to the number of necessary VTC courses and online courses we try to provide our HS students while they are simultaneously working in Google docs or Nimbus with their instructors and classmates. However, our teachers are having to plan who can do what just to get available bandwidth out of our meager 3-4 MB just to try to use the tools teachers in the lower 48 take for granted, and the need for a reliable high-speed network is only going to increase in the near future.

Please help level the playing field for Alaska's and other states' rural students need to compete in this global society.

The E-Rate program has been a phenomenal success in bringing Internet access to almost every classroom in America. In the last funding cycle, applications from schools and libraries requested a total of more than \$5 billion—twice the amount of available funding. I respectfully urge the FCC to increase funding for the E-Rate program to at least \$5 billion to meet this demand and create a formula that adjusts for rural schools to meet their needs and level the learning playing field. All students need access to high-speed broadband. Our nation's future depends on their success.